

# INSIDE

# TRACKS



## SUPERVISOR'S CORNER



Supervisor Dan Vincent

Frequently, Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff are asked what we are doing to counter animal rights group activists and anti-hunting sentiment. Fair question. The problem is obvious...the solution...not so easy. Obviously, the world we are living in is changing. We need to recognize that most people outside of the western U.S. no longer hunt. Many of these still "tolerate" hunting, assuming managers are looking out for the interests of wildlife.

We all need to take proactive steps to confirm our commitment to the health of our wildlife resources. It is incumbent that hunters display impeccable ethics so they aren't labeled as "slobs". We need to show our compassion for all wildlife species, not just huntable ones. Not long ago, it was acceptable for us to proudly boast our freshly killed wildlife in the back of our pickup or on the hood. Today this may no longer be appropriate. I'm not advocating we make excuses for hunting but instead suggest that we be as sensitive as possible to the non-hunting public's perception of our sport.

Montana's 1991 Legislature established the week of September 15-21 as Montana's Hunting Heritage Week. The purpose for this is to commemorate Montana's traditions and culture of hunting. Let's use this as a springboard to increase the public's awareness about the positive aspects of wildlife management and hunting. We need to show that hunting is an effective

tool to control wildlife populations. And we need to emphasize the contribution sportsmen and women have made to the preservation of our wildlife resources.

I urge you to become informed and get involved to protect this very important part of Montana's heritage.

## MONTANA'S HUNTING HERITAGE WEEK September 15-21, 1991

### WHAT?

Montana's 1991 Legislature established the "third week of September as an official week of observance of Montana's Hunting Heritage."

The legislative intent is threefold: (1) to reflect on hunting as an expression of Montana's culture and heritage; (2) to acknowledge the contributions made by sportsmen and sportswomen that have resulted in Montana's diverse wildlife populations; and (3) to celebrate the rich traditions of Montana's heritage.

### WHY?

Our nation's urbanized population is losing touch with the traditions of hunting and fishing, as well as the importance of wildlife management. Montana, long recognized as an exemplary wildlife conservation state, is emerging as a national leader in a new conservation movement, one that aspires to pass on our hunting heritage, tradition and culture to future generations.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

Events designed to help Montanans celebrate Hunting Heritage Week are now being planned. During Hunting Heritage Week, we want to:

- \* feature the contributions sportsmen and sportswomen have made to our wide array of wildlife resources;
- \* increase the opportunities for participation in hunting, one of our longest-standing outdoor traditions;
- \* stress the importance hunters have traditionally placed on sportsmanship and reaffirm the belief that the future of hunting is directly linked to good sportsmanship;
- \* underscore the role of hunting in wildlife management and conservation;

• create a broad base of appreciation for the aesthetic, recreational and economic values of our wildlife resources.



## BANQUET

The highlight of Hunting Heritage Week will be a banquet at Helena's Colonial Inn on the evening of September 17. Gov. Stan Stephens has agreed to be the keynote speaker.

## HOW YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED

Montana's hunting heritage is in our collective hands. If you are interested in helping to coordinate local or statewide events, sponsoring activities or offering prizes for competitions, please contact the Conservation Education Division, Attention: Montana's Hunting Heritage Week, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59620.

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## MAKING THE BIG LEAGUE

Warden Jim Roberts of Eureka began his college career at Montana Tech in Butte, he had two things on his mind: playing pro baseball and geological engineering. Baseball was the first thing to go.

"I blew out my knee the first year," said Roberts. "I came back pretty well the second year and got a baseball scholarship, but I found out that it's hard for us Montana boys to be pro material with such a short season. We played eight of 11 home games in the snow. I never made it to a pro training camp."

Roberts also dropped his ambitions for a career in geological engineering. "I ran up against all the physics and math," he said. "So I dropped out of Butte, went to Missoula and enrolled in Fish and Wildlife."

Roberts enrolled in the warden trainee program while attending the University of Montana, and worked construction during the summer. He graduated in 1976 and began his career as a warden. He landed the warden job in Eureka in 1983.

Of all his duties as a warden, Roberts considers working with youth the most important. "I've seen a number of kids shoot their first deer," he said. "One of the most rewarding things I've ever done is to watch a kid shoot his first elk, then go up and talk to the kid before his feet hit the ground."

"It's not all positive though," said Roberts. "I've had to confiscate untagged deer, and had kids tell me 'Dad told me not to tag it.' Is that the way to bring up a sportsman?"

Roberts, a Libby native, downplays the danger inherent in his job, but admits it's there. "In northwest Montana, you run into a lot of people who want to be left alone. They're armed and they perceive law enforcement as a barrier to their freedom. You have to be careful - that's what training and common sense are for."

Roberts literally drove right into a dangerous situation his first day on the job in Eureka. He drove into town with his loaded trailer and was flagged down by local law enforcement officials to go in on a case involving two survivalists from the eastern U.S.

The two men had been driving around the area in a station wagon sprayed with camo-paint. The men had cut a hole in the roof of the station wagon and had been seen popping out of the hole and firing at trees, deer and ducks with submachine guns. Someone had also reported that the men had "harvested" some fish in a stream with a hand grenade.

Luckily, the law enforcement team had no trouble when they went in to take custody of the men. The survivalists had been squatting on some land in a shack. "I remember that there was a grouse boiling in a pot on the stove, and it was April," said Roberts.

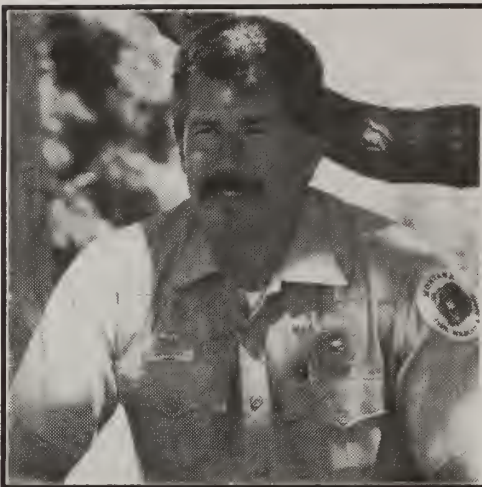
Paperwork and time on the telephone are two parts of the job that are becoming more time consuming, according to Roberts. "If I go on a one-week vacation, I'll have three pages of calls to return--people wanting to know where to hunt, where to fish, and so on."

Once, a woman from eastern Montana with two children arrived in Eureka on a Saturday with no prior contact and expected Roberts to take her Moose hunting. Roberts told her over the phone that taking people hunting was not really something a warden did, and suggested some drainages she could try for a moose.

"I was gassing up Monday morning and the attendant told me the woman came through late Sunday night pulling a trailer. She'd shot a big bull with 30-inch antlers."

Roberts is known as one of the hardest-working and dedicated wardens in a state of hard-working and dedicated wardens. He never made the big league in baseball, but he made the big league as a warden. In 1989 he was presented the prestigious Pogue-Elms award for excellence in wildlife enforcement in the northwest U.S. and Canada.

"I love getting out on patrol," said Roberts. "What I like best is seeing the sun rise, and seeing the sun set."



## ANNUAL FARC PICNIC A SUCCESS

The annual picnic for kids with handicaps in Flathead county was held at Woodland Park earlier this summer. The event, sponsored by the Flathead Association of Retarded Citizens (FARC), features a cookout, games, socializing, and a fishing clinic. This year, the Department's hatchery at Arlee supplied the rainbow trout in tanks for the clinic. Kids fish for the trout with the help of volunteers and personnel from the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and Flathead Wildlife, Inc.

Don Herman of Flathead Wildlife Inc. has participated for the last four years. "I find it to be one of the most rewarding things I do," said Herman. "These kids get a huge thrill out of catching the trout. You can see their eyes light up."



Bob Domrose and Friend

"It's the only opportunity for some of these kids to go fishing," said Bob Domrose, recently retired from the Department. "It's the best use of hatchery fish that I can think of."

Bob Neitzling, who has a daughter in FARC programs, cooked about 150 burgers and hot dogs for the event. "This is something that FARC can give the kids," said Neitzling. "It's a great way for them to end the school year."







Back Row: L-R Shelby Keltner, Oliver De LaTorre, Crew Leader Leslie De Witt, Robbie McDonald, John Short Front Row: L to R Kim Lundtsford, Karla Kohlbeck, Mike Gerber

## CONSERVATION CORPS WORKERS REFURBISH PARKS

Youth of the Montana Conservation Corps have taken on a big task at the Region's state parks and fishing access sites. And the work isn't always pretty.

"We cleaned the fishing access sites for the first time this year," said Leslie De Witt, a Corps crew leader. "It was a real eye-opener for the kids. There were so many cigarette butts, it was incredible. And in spite of all the restrictions and bans on fireworks at state sites, we picked up boxes of fireworks garbage after the Fourth of July."

Other jobs taken on by the seven-person crew lead by De Witt include noxious weed control, painting picnic tables and buildings, and general park maintenance.

Outhouse duty is not one of the more popular activities. "The kids see the comfort stations in such a mess, and begin to realize what adults do," said De Witt. "People seem to go to the bathroom everywhere but in the toilet."

The Montana Conservation Corps is operated in conjunction with the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. The goal of the program is to provide meaningful work experience in the public sector, along with career counseling and education to disadvantaged youth, ages 14-21. The crew working state parks and fishing access sites is a good example of the kind of partnership that the program seeks to foster.

Youth in the program are paid the minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour. Crew members plan on spending the money they make on a new rifle, cars, clothes, video camera, and a globe.

What do the kids like best about the job? Painting, weed pulling - and the paycheck.

## AGENCIES AND TRIBES ENTER PARTNER SHIP ON FISHERIES IMPROVEMENTS

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes will enter a partnership to improve fisheries in the Flathead System through a comprehensive mitigation plan. The program is part of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife program, and is dependent on approval by the Council this fall. Plans include fisheries habitat improvements, removal of fish migration barriers, hatchery fish production and better reservoir level, river flows, and water temperatures.

The agencies have begun some pilot projects in the basin. For example, the Bonneville Power Administration funded stream improvement work and fish planting in Mill Creek, east of Kalispell, and fish cover structures in Hungry Horse Reservoir. Also, the Montana legislature appropriated money to begin upgrades of the Creston National Fish Hatchery in anticipation of that hatchery being dedicated to producing fish for the Flathead system.

If the mitigation plans are approved, large-scale work on these programs will begin. For example, several million dollars are proposed for major upgrades of Creston, Somers and Rose creek hatchery sites.

In the interim, workers at Creston Hatchery are preparing to raise kokanee to a larger, yearling size for experimental plant in Flathead Lake. These fish could be protected for their first year mortality factors such as predation, and offer a better chance to reestablish a reproducing kokanee population in the lake.

Many groups have helped the agencies and tribes develop the mitigation plans. Ken Kettinger of the Flathead Fishing Association, sees the program fitting in well with the goals of his group. "We are trying to increase fishing opportunities in the Region," says Kettinger. "We feel that kokanee is a good recreational fish, and planting them won't introduce any new diseases or new fish into Flathead Lake. Also, kokanee are forage for lake trout."

Kettinger's group has offered money and time to help raise kokanee to a larger size at Creston hatchery. "We'd like to get a jump on the mitigation program, and see Creston hatchery used to its maximum. If it takes a little push here, a little nudge there, so be it."

The Flathead lakers have also been involved in helping to develop the mitigation plans. The Lakers are most interested in improving natural river temperatures and coordinating releases of Hungry Horse and Kerr dams. In all, 24 groups participated in plan development.

**WILDLIFE QUIZ** -- complete the wildlife quiz, clip, and mail to **Inside Tracks**, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT. 59901. Correct entries will be placed in a drawing for a free one year subscription to the Department's magazine, **Montana Outdoors**. The winner and correct answers will be announced in the next issue of **Inside Tracks**.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the largest member of the deer family.
2. The dominant male    female (circle) governs an elk harem.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the largest member of the minnow family.
4. Which member of the weasel family spends the most time in trees?
5. The Yellowstone cutthroat trout and the \_\_\_\_\_ share the title of the Montana State fish.
6. Population cycles between snowshoe hare and \_\_\_\_\_ are closely related.
7. The northern squawfish is a member of the minnow sucker (circle) family.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ marmot is the most common marmot in higher elevation sites in Montana.

**Inside Tracks** is published by Region One of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks:

Dan Vincent, Supervisor  
Jim Cross, Wildlife Manager  
Jim Vashro, Fisheries Manager  
Dave Conklin, Parks Manager  
Ed Kelly, Warden Captain  
John Fraley, Information Officer, Newsletter Editor

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